

Developing Social and Emotional Skills Through Character Education in Late Early Childhoods in An SPK School

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Abstract

Character education is a significant feature of a child's social and emotional skill development. A school needs to initiate character development for its students through an integrated curriculum. This qualitative research investigated why and how Sekolah Pelita Harapan Bukit Sentul implemented a curriculum integrated with character education and the results of the implementation. This case study also aimed to find out when to apply character education. Five respondents between the ages of six to seven who were new students in grade one were selected to determine the impact of character education on a child's social and emotional skills development. The results showed that character education impacted a child's social-emotional skill development and increased the child's positive attitude, such as commitment, independence, respect, and caring. This research suggested that a curriculum integrated with character education is one of the most efficient approaches for schools to implement.

Keywords: *character education, socialemotional skills, late early childhood, IB PYP, Christian school, Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama, SPK, Collaborative Education Unit*

1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is essentially education organized to facilitate the overall growth and development of children, which emphasizes the development of all aspects of the children's personality (Ananda and Fadhilaturrahmi, 2018). The theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) states that children develop in complex inter-relationship systems from an early age. Each layer of the environment plays a significant role in shaping their character and personality development. The development and growth occur very rapidly at an early age because, at this age, intelligence's potential determines the development of intelligence (Berk, 2003).

Ratna Megawangi (2004), an observer of early childhood education, in her book *Character Education: The right solution to build a nation*, identified a potential problem in character education. She stated that parents' and teachers' limitations in dealing with early childhood and their ignorance of the stages of holistic child development influence the development of positive social and emotional skills in early childhood.

Parents believe that the best educational institution that can realize these expectations is an educational institution emphasizing not only knowledge development but also the noble values of humanity and the Godly character to direct positive development in children. Therefore, in selecting a formal educational institution for their children, parents

need to consider the factors of the right educational institution that is not in conflict with their philosophy (Berkowitz and Bier, 2004).

Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama (SPK) is an education unit in Indonesia managed based on cooperation between a recognized foreign educational institution and an Indonesian educational institution that complies with the statutory provisions. SPK is an institution that uses a foreign curriculum integrated with the national curriculum in the learning and teaching process and takes into account official school accreditations.

The implementation of schools with an SPK status follows the regulation issued by the ministry of education of Indonesia, *Permendikbud* No. 31 of 2014, about the cooperation between foreign educational institutions and Indonesian educational institutions in the implementation and management of education. A more technical derivative regulation follows the regulation. The regulation of the Director-General of Primary and Secondary Education of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture No. 407/D/PP/2015 about technical guidelines for implementing and managing primary education by foreign educational institutions and Indonesian educational institutions. *Pelita Harapan* School Sentul is one of the SPK schools in Indonesia, located around 50 km from Central Jakarta. The school is a private Christian school under the *Yayasan Pendidikan Pelita Harapan* (YPPH) education foundation, providing education for Pre-school to Grade 12 students.

The educational philosophy of the SPH promotes the values of cooperation, commitment, critical thinking, humility, respect, initiative, encouragement, and empathy. Recognizing each student as a unique child of God, SPH attempts to meet each child's learning needs and instil a life-long love of learning and appropriate actions. The school seeks to provide its students with the skills to use technology and critically evaluate information. Social, physical, and spiritual activities (SPH Guide, 2019) and Creativity-Activity-Service are essential aspects of students' life (IB Mission Statement, 2017).

To meet these expectations, SPH chose to use an international curriculum of the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization). The IB emphasizes character development in its curriculums. In each unit plan of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the development of learners' character, as formulated in the IB learner profile, is essential. The formation of character is crucial because it has a positive impact on children's social and emotional development. Students train to be more courageous in expressing their thoughts, tolerant, and sensitive to those around them so that they are ready to become members of the community.

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP), for children aged 3 to 12, is a student-centered curriculum. It allows students to ask questions, explore, argue, experiment, look for, and find answers through daily learning engagements. With its focus on the development of learners' characters formulated in the IB learner profile, the IB PYP develops young students as caring, active participants in a lifelong learning journey. Seeing what the IB PYP curriculum offers, it is necessary to know more about the application of character education in line with the concept of the curriculum. The curriculum is an alternative for educational institutions wishing to produce cognitive and affective smart students.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative study used exploratory case study methods with in-depth observations of children's behaviour. This case study was a descriptive approach to the overall situation, including the process or sequence of events. The research questions are: why SPH Bukit Sentul used a curriculum with a character approach, how SPH Bukit Sentul carried out character education, and the development of students' social and emotional skills after attending character education at the SPH Bukit Sentul. The research is to find

out the ways to develop social and emotional skills in early childhood and to get a clear picture of the application of character education in the SPH Bukit Sentul.

The objectives of the research are: to find the reasons for implementing a curriculum with a character approach, to describe the school application of character education, and to assess the extent of early year children's social and emotional skill development after attending character education in a Collaborative Education Unit (SPK) school environment.

The research data was collected through class observation on learning activities in the classroom related to character education and on children's social and emotional skills development. Interviews were conducted with school leaders, the IB-PYP curriculum coordinator, and teachers. Open-ended questions were used to collect information about experiences in teaching curriculum with an emphasis on the character, the implementation of character education at the school, and how the school measures the success of its implementation. The research took place at *Pelita Harapan School in Bukit Sentul* (SPH) in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. The school is a private Christian school with an SPK status. In its Junior School, which includes Pre-school to Grade Five for children aged 3-11 years old, the school implements the IB PYP Curriculum. Being in an SPK status, the school also implements the required Indonesian national curriculum, namely Civics, religion, and Indonesian language.

The respondents in this study were five new students aged six to seven years of the first grade. As new students, they had not received any form of character education in the school. These students had never been learning in a school with a curriculum emphasizing character education nor forms of character education taught by a national teacher and an expatriate teacher team-teaching in a class.

Table 1. Students' Profile

No	Name	Gender		Age		Religion				Nationality	
		F	M	6 y.o	7 y.o	CH	CA	IS	H/B	ID	EX
1	Student 1		x	x			x			x	
2	Student 2	x		x		x				x	
3	Student 3		x		x		x			x	
4	Student 4		x		x		x			x	
5	Student 5		x		x		x			x	
Total		1	4	2	3	1	4	0	0	5	0

Notes:

F = Female CH = Christian IS = Islam ID = Indonesian
 M = Male CA = Catholic H/B = Hindu/Buddha EX= Expatriate

Table 2. Data Collection

No	Research Questions	Data Collection Techniques	Data Collection Instruments	Resources
1.	Why does the SPH Bukit Sentul use a curriculum with a character education approach?	data analysis interviews	<i>checklist</i> interview questions	Principal, IBPYP Curriculum Coordinator
2.	How is character education carried out in the SPH Bukit Sentul?	class observation interviews	observation guideline interview questions	Principal, IBPYP Coordinator, Homeroom teacher class environment

3.	How are the attitudes of students as the results of character education in the SPH Bukit Sentul?	interviews class observation data analysis	Observation guideline interview checklist	IBPYP Curriculum Coordinator Homeroom teacher students
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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sekolah Pelita Harapan (SPH) Bukit Sentul School is a Christian school with the status of Collaborative Education Unit (SPK) implementing a character approach in its curriculum, covering aspects of children's social and emotional skills. The vision and mission of the school have always been affirmed to the school community since its inception. The vision is True Knowledge, Godly Character, and Faith in Christ. SPH education foundation wants its students to be servant leaders with Godly character, people of influence and action in the world, well-equipped to engage positively wherever they may serve. (SPH Guide, 2019; SPH website, 2020)

In its mission, the IB stated that the organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. It encourages students to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners (The IB Mission Statement, 2019). The mission aligns with the SPH mission and vision. Through sustained inquiries in the IB PYP, students gain the knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills, and dispositions to make a difference in their own lives, their communities, and the wider world (IB, 2019). Following the IB requirement, in planning a unit of inquiry, PYP teachers carefully set out the learning outcomes to achieve, including the concepts, skills, and learner profile to focus on within the unit.

The six transdisciplinary themes of the PYP capture human commonalities significant and relevant to students anywhere in the world. In its transdisciplinary themes, the PYP has been influenced by the work of Boyer (1995) on human commonalities, and the perspectives of Tye and Kniep (1991). With the learning organized around transdisciplinary themes, students see the interconnectedness and interdependence of issues. They can see things from multiple perspectives. Then, as part of the world's citizens, they feel the urge to engage in responsible action to make the world a better place to live.

A school is a strategic place for character education (Megawangi, 2004). For this purpose, schools need a curriculum model that is not just concerned with cognitive development but also pay attention to the development of children's character. The IB PYP requires that learning must consider engaging, relevant, challenging, and significant criteria. *Engaging* means the learning must make children interested, actively participate in the process. *Relevant* means the learning must relate to the students' prior knowledge and experience. The material delivered must have a context in students' daily lives. *Challenging* means that learning must increase the students' knowledge. Lastly, *significant* means the learning material should contribute to essential concepts in human life, having enduring value regardless of the students' geography or background.

3.1 Implementation of Character Education

Daily devotion:

Character education in early childhood is an effort to inculcate children's good behaviour, proper attitude in worship, good citizenship, healthy interaction with others and the environment, and commendable behaviour beneficial for his success in life (Khaironi, 2017). For character building, SPH set a particular time each day to start the

class with a devotion. Devotional activity is an essential concept of character education (Suyanto, 2012). Fifteen minutes before class, shortly after the bell rang, students lined up in front of the class. They waited for the class teacher to come and greet them. Teachers welcomed and blessed the children, "Good morning, children. God bless you." Students returned the greeting, "Good morning, Teachers. God bless you." Then, the teachers waited for the children to be ready before inviting them into class. The students unpacked their bags, put their bags into their lockers, and put their agendas in an assigned place. The teacher taught students to be responsible. The morning routine is in line with Hendriana and Jacobus's idea (2016) about character development for early childhood through habituation.

Students gathered on the carpet in front of the whiteboard and sat in a circle after unpacking. The teacher started the morning devotion by introducing the week's focus on character building. The religion subject coordinator set up the themes of character building in advance. Three to four weeks were allocated for each character theme or virtue. Obviously, the school considered character-building necessary as it spent much time on the development of each character. It is in line with Lickona's idea that virtues play a crucial role in moral life (Lickona, 2001). The virtues discussed in the morning devotion were derived from the school's vision and mission (table 3).

Table3. Character Themes

<i>Virtues</i>	<i>Values</i>
<i>love</i>	<i>positive relationship</i>
<i>righteousness</i>	<i>justice, shalom</i>
<i>faithfulness</i>	<i>commitment, cooperation</i>
<i>truth</i>	<i>integrity, excellence</i>
<i>humility</i>	<i>servanthood, courtesy, respect</i>
<i>compassion</i>	<i>dignity, sensitivity</i>
<i>perseverance</i>	<i>enterprise, initiative, risk-taking</i>
<i>joy</i>	<i>contentment, enthusiasm</i>
<i>wisdom</i>	<i>discernment, understanding, clarity, critical thinking</i>
<i>hope</i>	<i>courage, conviction</i>

Next, the teacher randomly chose a child and handed an index card to write the day's prayer requests. Some students were assigned the class leader and class helper of the day. When the prayer leader was writing down the prayer requests, the teacher asked the class leader to set the class calendar and take a picture Bible. The teacher chose a bible story related to the week's character theme to read together as a class.



Figure 1. A Student Writes A Prayer on An Easel

Weekly chapel:

All students from K1 to Grade Six, aged 3 to 11, and Junior School teachers attended a weekly Junior School chapel. It was 60 minutes long and held in the chapel room. The religion subject teacher was responsible for setting the quarterly chapel themes. Following the theme, the assigned class took turns leading the chapel, including the activities.

Tabel 4. Quarterly Character Themes and Classes in Charge

Virtues	Values	Grade
<i>wisdom</i>	<i>discernment</i>	Specialist Teachers
<i>wisdom</i>	<i>understanding</i>	Grade 6
<i>wisdom</i>	<i>clarity</i>	Grade 4
<i>wisdom</i>	<i>critical thinking</i>	Grade 3
<i>hope</i>	<i>courage</i>	Kindergarten
<i>hope</i>	<i>conviction</i>	Grade 5
<i>hope</i>	<i>courage & conviction</i>	Grade 2

For the chapel, students sat in rows per class. Kindergarten children were seated in the front rows and Grade Six at the back rows. At the front part of the chapel room, a small stage was set up for the students leading the chapel. The chapel followed the particular sequence. It began with an opening prayer followed by singing together. Then, the character theme of the week’s focus was introduced, followed by a song and a bible verse reading. Next, the assigned class led or performed an activity. It could be a skit, puppet show, poetry reading, or monologue related to the character theme of the week. Another song followed before a sermon or Bible story was presented. The sermon was about the values and virtues. Finally, the chapel was ended with a closing prayer and a closing song. The last minutes of the gathering were used for announcements and award distribution. The awards were presented to acknowledge students who had successfully demonstrated good character for the week and to motivate students.



Figure 2. Chapel Program

Units of inquiry:

The IB PYP transdisciplinary programme supports active learning, creativity, critical abilities, and imagination. In this case, the IB was influenced by Bourdieu's (1990) belief in what should be the curriculum's driving principles. The IB PYP transdisciplinary programme of inquiry offers a broad, balanced, conceptual, and connected learning experience. Six transdisciplinary themes form the structure of a PYP school's programme of inquiry. The IB claimed that the themes capture human commonalities significant and relevant across cultures, geographic regions, and student learning stages (IB, 2019).

Based on the indicators of transdisciplinary themes, a PYP school designs its own program of inquiry. A well-designed programme of inquiry ensures students gain a balance of subject-specific knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills, opportunities to develop the attributes of the IB learner profile and to take action as the result of learning. Students aged 3-6 years old may have four units in a year, with two must-do units namely those under transdisciplinary themes 'Who we are' and 'How We express ourselves'. Students aged 7-12 years old are required to learn six units yearly.

The learner profile is central to the IB PYP definition of what it means to be internationally-minded, and it directs schools to focus on the learning. The IB learners exemplify the attributes expressed in this profile: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.

The IB believes that a focus on the development of attitudes is vital. The attitudes here include personal attitudes towards people, towards the environment and towards learning, and those that contribute to the well-being of the individual and of the group. In its publication *Making the PYP Happen* (2009), the IB defines attitudes as what IB schools want students to feel, value, and demonstrate. In PYP schools, students should demonstrate appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance (IB, 2009). In its recent publication, *From Principles into Practice* (2019), the IB has subsumed these attitudes under the attributes of the learner profile. This study used the attitudes, for they matched better with the SPH's values and virtues, and the study took place before the launch of the new publication.

Collaborative planning has a strong emphasis in the PYP. Teachers collaboratively plan, develop, and continually modify units of inquiry, based on reflection with students and colleague teachers. As implied by its name, in transdisciplinary units, students learn to

appreciate knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills, and personal attributes as a connected whole.

Tabel 5. Unit of Inquiry Planners

<i>How the world works</i>	<i>How we express ourselves</i>	<i>Sharing the planet</i>
<i>Reduce, Reuse, Recycle</i>	<i>Just Imagine</i>	<i>The Circle of Life</i>
<i>Subject Focus</i> <i>Social Studies, Science & Technology</i>	<i>Subject Focus</i> <i>Language, Arts</i>	<i>Subject Focus</i> <i>Science & Technology, Personal Social Education</i>
<i>Central Idea</i> <i>Our personal choices can change our environment.</i>	<i>Central Idea</i> <i>People tell stories in a variety of ways to explore feelings, explain the world or entertain.</i>	<i>Central Idea</i> <i>All animals and plants have life cycles characterized by physical change.</i>
<i>Concepts</i> <i>responsibility, change, function</i>	<i>Concepts</i> <i>perspective, form, function</i>	<i>Concepts</i> <i>change, form</i>
<i>Attitudes</i> <i>commitment, integrity, empathy</i>	<i>Attitudes</i> <i>appreciation, enthusiasm, creativity</i>	<i>Attitudes</i> <i>appreciation, curiosity</i>
<i>An inquiry into</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how different materials decompose</i> • <i>how different materials can be reused</i> • <i>the steps we can take to reduce, reuse and recycle our waste in school and at home</i> 	<i>An inquiry into</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>why people tell stories</i> • <i>different types and purposes of stories</i> • <i>different ways that stories are presented such as drama, dance, music, puppetry and images</i> 	<i>An inquiry into</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the major phases in the life cycles of animals and plants.</i> • <i>the similarities and differences between life cycles in different animal and plant species</i>

Learning environment:

In daily learning activities, class teachers created a learning environment following the theme of the inquiry unit. When launching a new unit, teachers introduced the components of the unit, namely: central idea, lines of inquiries, key concepts, the learner profile attributes, and the attitudes. The learner profile attributes are the character themes to develop throughout the unit spanning around 5 to 8 weeks. It is to ensure that effective character education can be observed in the students' individual behaviour continuously (Lickona, 2001). Learning objectives, learner profile attributes, attitudes, and assessment criteria were communicated and discussed with students.

Teachers often used bulletin boards around the classroom to post information about the units and display the development of students' thinking process and inquiry journey. These displays, which included the targeted character themes or attitudes, were often referred to by both teachers and students throughout the unit. In discussions and presentations, the teachers constantly reminded the students of the targeted attributes of the learner profile and attitudes. The teachers evaluated students' progress using diverse assessment strategies, such as observations, performance assessments, process-focused

assessments, and open-ended tasks. Diverse assessment tools were used, such as anecdotal records, rubrics, checklists, continuums, and exemplars.

Parents' education:

SPH Bukit Sentul school involved the students' parents in educating their children. The school designed activities to do by both parents and children for children's character building (Megawangi, 2004). The school also routinely held seminars or workshops on diverse topics to increase parents' awareness of the importance of their involvement in educating children at home. The seminars and workshops were led by experts in their fields. The school also held seminars devoted only to fathers, called Fathers' Gathering. In the gathering, mothers were allowed to accompany the fathers in the event, but were not allowed to attend it to represent the fathers. These initiatives were intended to equip parents in developing their children's character.

School publications:

The school periodically sent magazines and newsletters to parents. A class newsletter was sent home once a week. It contains information on learning and teaching activities by subject disciplines, the character theme in focus, and other administrative matters. As the children's primary contact point to the environment, parents must be equipped to know what is being done by their children in school and stay involved in their children's education (Wortham, 2006).

In addition, the school published "The Light", a semesterly magazine, in the last few years. In each issue, the magazine had dedicated columns called Parenting Corner and Thinking Themely. Parenting Corner is part of the effort for parents' education, while Thinking Themely discusses an aspect of the Biblical focus chosen as the school theme of the year.

3.2 The Development of Character Education at School

The subjects of the study were observed for three months. The development of their social and emotional skills was observed. Likewise, the application of the IB learner profile attributes and attitudes was assessed. The assessment includes the commitment to completing tasks, being able to work independently, on time, not hesitate to express opinions, being sensitive to friends, and responding to the teacher with ease. The instrument was designed and used for daily general observations in class, in weekly chapel, and in particular observations related to the unit of inquiry and the attitudes planned in the units. A 1-5 scale was used for data recording. The three-month observation data was accumulated and calculated to find the average value. The results were show in table 6.

Tabel 6. Development of the Learner Profile Attributes for 3 Months in Percentage

Criteria	Score				
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
Commitment to completing the task	10.14	7.52	20.52	12.68	1.68
Can work independently	16.75	6.52	8.93	6.44	3.45
On-time	2.95	1.28	4.98	1.92	8.97

Eager to express opinions	0.42	17.00	9.96	3.80	11.38
Can be sensitive to friends	4.99	4.52	8.74	9.32	0.00
Easy to respond to the teacher	5.57	3.62	9.79	10.10	9.66

Based on data on the percentage of students' development in three months, the results of observations with gain scores are calculated to determine the overall development of students' social and emotional skills. The data obtained was shown in table 7.

Table7. Gain Score of the Learner Profile Development in Three Months

Criteria	Gain Score				
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
Commitment to completing the task	0.18	0.26	0.48	0.52	0.02
Can work independently	0.22	0.20	0.27	0.32	0.05
On-time	0.08	0.05	0.16	0.11	0.17
Eager to express opinions	0.01	0.14	0.17	0.12	0.14
Can be sensitive to friends	0.12	0.11	0.19	0.24	0.00
Easy to respond to the teacher	0.10	0.07	0.22	0.30	0.12

Notes: g -high; ($<g>$) $> 0,7$ g -medium; $0,7 (<g>) 0,3$ g -low ;($<g>$) $< 0,3$

The data in table 7 indicates that overall the five students' social and emotional skills are developing, although the gain score indicator was not optimal, ranging between 0.01-0.52. The relatively short time of observation, three months long, could be the cause of this g -low to g -medium score. Thus, the concept of learning with the character education approach led by the homeroom teachers had a positive impact on aspects of children's social and emotional skills.

Table 8 shows the observation results of the weekly chapel. The data shows that for three months, the children's social and emotional skills development observed at chapel was generally at a sufficient level with a value range from 2.96 - 3.93. Only one student scored below the range, namely Student 5, scored 2.71 in the criteria *easy to respond to the speaker*.

Table 8. Students' Average Character Development Observed during the Weekly Chapel

Criteria	Score				
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
Singing happily	3.29	3.14	4.00	3.57	3.00
Following the event	3.86	3.86	4.00	4.14	3.00

Having a sensitivity towards friends	3.57	4.14	3.86	4.43	3.14
Easy to respond to the speaker	3.14	3.29	3.86	3.57	2.71
Average	3.46	3.61	3.93	3.93	2.96

Indicator: 5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Fair 2 = Low 1 = Very Low

An instrument was used to measure students' social and emotional development weekly. The instrument followed the personal attitudes suggested by the IB. They are: appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance. The IB's focus on the development of personal attitudes towards people, towards the environment and learning is in line with Nurmalitasari's (2015) beliefs. Social and emotional development must begin at an early age, especially at the age of kindergarten (Nurmalitasari, 2015). Table 9 lists out the results of the gain score for three months.

Table 9. Percentage of the Development of Students' Attitudes in Three Months

Criteria	Score				
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
creativity	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00
commitment	33.33	33.33	0.00	40.00	33.33
confidence	50.00	50.00	0.00	40.00	33.33
enthusiastic	0.00	33.33	25.00	25.00	0.00
independence	33.33	50.00	25.00	40.00	50.00
integrity	-50.00	0.00	50.00	60.00	0.00
curiosity	33.33	33.33	0.00	25.00	33.33
empathy	33.33	0.00	25.00	40.00	33.33
appreciate	0.00	0.00	25.00	40.00	-50.00
cooperation	33.33	33.33	25.00	40.00	0.00
respectful	33.33	0.00	40.00	40.00	33.33
tolerance	33.33	0.00	60.00	40.00	0.00
Average	21.53	21.53	25.00	37.92	13.89

The assessment was based on homeroom teachers' observation. It was evident that after three months of attending school with the education system implemented at SPH, the students experienced positive development almost in all characters. The homeroom teachers identified that the students became more independent and active participants in the classroom. They demonstrated higher self-confidence and critical thinking skill. It was evident from their risk-takingly asking questions to the teachers, answering teachers' questions, and performing public speaking. They also showed higher interest in reading. These findings support the previous study by Agboola and Chen Tsai (2012). The education system in schools that support character education with deliberate efforts to optimize behaviour contributes positively to students' social and emotional development (Agboola and Chen Tsai, 2012).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the Pelita Harapan School Bukit Sentul (SPH)

has chosen to adopt the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) because of some reasons. The IB's beliefs and values are congruent with the vision and mission of the school. Both institutions believe in the importance of the development of character, not only the cognitive side but also the affective side, including the child's social and emotional aspects.

The IB learner profile attributes are in line with the school's educational goals, which is to produce leaders with Godly character. The concept of learning offered by the IB seeks to educate the child as a whole, someone with knowledge, skills, and values. The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world (IB, 2009). The IB learner profile represents a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that encompass intellectual, personal, emotional, and social growth (IB, 2019). As a Christian school, SPH brings character education further to its Christian values. The spiritual element is added to the overall curriculum to address the spiritual needs of the school community.

Character education in SPH involves structured components such as devotion, chapel, and subject disciplines. These formally structured or less structured learning experiences allowed students to learn and explore character and values. Homeroom teachers played an essential role in shaping the students' character through the class interactions. Teachers used an iterative process of refinement and modification of behaviour. The teachers actively reminded students to be problem solvers, highly committed, confident, independent, caring, tolerant, and respectful. A high expectation was set for students to show integrity and empathy. Teachers also modeled life long learners and expect students the same. This study showed that these school efforts had a significant impact on children's social and emotional growth.

Parents must understand that they play an essential role in their child's education, not merely on academics but also on the character (Triatmanto, 2010). It is critical that parents understand that they play an important role in their child's education, not merely on academics but also on the child's character (Triatmanto, 2010). Therefore, SPH involved parents to partner in children's character education. Regular information was sent home to report on the child's progress. Learning activities were informed to parents so they could be in line with school goals. Parent seminars and gatherings equipped parents with tips on how to raise children with Christian values.

The observation results indicate that students' social and emotional skills show positive growth after attending character education at SPH. Early childhood education with the concept of integrated learning takes into account the genetic factor (nature). Academic growth is important, but character growth is equally important. Integrated character education emphasizes the importance of character as part of children's social and emotional growth. The learning environment (nurture) is also fundamental in education (Wortham, 2006). The results show progress in children's behaviour during the three months of observation, assessed with the learners' attitudes defined by IB PYP. Students became more committed, confident, independent, tolerant, enthusiastic, and cooperative. The children were also reported to show more integrity. This attitude will continue to develop if adequately directed and fostered early on.

In conclusion, indeed, it takes a village to raise a child. The adopted curriculum or school curriculum supporting the school's vision and mission facilitates character education as it provides direction and structure. This research suggested that a curriculum integrated with character education is one of the most efficient approaches for schools to implement. Beyond that, character education works best when it is an integrated effort of the whole school community: school pedagogical leaders, faculty, and parents.

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